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CINDERELLA RE-TOLD.

By E. Dowling.

"NO, I won't tell another story. You needn't ask me. I am too, too tired."

"But just—just——" said Nuala.

"No," said her relative. "No. I simply couldn't. This is final. I'm too tired. And besides," she added, "nobody ever tells me a story at all."

"But sure you never ask anyone to tell you a story," said Nuala, promptly. "I'll tell you 'Cinderella,' if you like, or 'Red Riding Hood.' You can have either. Which will you have?"

Thus overwhelmed, her audience of one voted for "Cinderella."

"Cinderella? That's lovely," said Nuala with a smack, and without further preamble plunged in.

"Once upon a time there were two Wicked Sisters and they had awful big feet—horrid," crinkling her nose, "and they were always going to balls, trying to get married——"

"Do you have to pay going to balls?" she interrupted herself to ask. "I'd love to go to a ball. What time do balls be at?"

"Pay? Well, no. At least not at the sort of ball Cinderella went to. The people were asked to go by the Prince."

"But the Wicked Sisters?" exclaimed Nuala, horror-stricken. "Why would the Prince *ask* them and they so wicked? Why?

"I don't know. Maybe he did not know they were so bad as they really were."

"And would a Prince invite me?"

"Yes, I'm sure, if he knew you. Now, go on with the

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story. You were at the part where they were always going to balls."

"Yes. And then there was Cinderella. They used to keep her in the kitchen riddling cinders and never take her with them anywhere, or to balls or a thing. And this night they were going to a ball given by the Prince, and she was crying in the kitchen, dressed in her old, raggedy clothes. And when they were gone the Fairy Godmother came in, and she had a high, black hat and a——"

"Is this a real story?" asked the story-teller suddenly, "or," looking sternly at her audience, "is it only a make-up?"

"Real?" asked the audience, indignantly. "Is it a real story! Of course it is a real story. Go on about the Godmother."

"Oh, yes. And the Fairy Godmother asked Cinderella what she was crying for, and she said they were all gone off to the ball and left her at home. And then the Fairy Godmother, my dear, said: 'Well, don't cry any more, and I'll send you to the ball. Get a pumpkin out of the garden.' So Cinderella got one, and she changed it into a lovely carriage."

"What's a pumpkin?" here inquired the story-teller. "Have we any pumpkins in our garden?" looking about. "Is it like a rockery?"

"No, more like a vegetable marrow, I think."

"And if we had one," inquired the story-teller further, "could we change it into a carriage, do you think?"

"If we could get a Fairy Godmother we could—well, go on."

"And then the Fairy Godmother said: 'Have you any rats?' and Cinderella said she had, and she went out and brought in a few, and the Fairy changed them——"

"Oh, it was most gorgeous," said Nuala, again interrupting herself delightedly, "she changed them into a footman and two horses. Look, that's the footman in the middle and these are the two horses." And she churned up the grass with a bit of stick.

"And then she touched Cinderella with her little wand, and all her old clothes, my dear, fell off and she got a

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most lovely, beautiful, exquisite dress on, all gold it was, and a lovely wreath of flowers for her hair, and a pair of glass slippers. It was lovely."

"And then she drove off. But last of all the Fairy Godmother said: 'Be sure you leave before the clock strikes twelve.' And when Cinderella got to the Palace nobody knew her, and she was dancing with the Prince all the time; dancing, dancing, dancing, till she forgot and the clock struck twelve and she had to run away, and her lovely clothes changed into old rags. And in her hurry she lost one of her shoes, and when she got out the cab was gone!"

"Why didn't it wait, I wonder? Why?" here asked the story-teller, evidently confused, and thinking of the great catastrophes on which Romance hinges in terms of the minor accidents of commonplace life.

"Why did the cabman not wait?" she repeated.

"Because—don't you remember—the carriage had been transformed into——"

"Oh, yes—it was all changed back, so she had to run home just as she was. And the next day the Prince sent a page everywhere to look for the owner of the slipper, because he was going to marry whoever it was, and the Wicked Sisters were cutting down their feet and squeezing their waists and—and—and the Fat became the Thin,"—this with a burst of joyous laughter provoked by the discovery that this was an original touch and not in accepted versions.

"The Fat became the Thin," she repeated. "Oh, it was terrible—very funny!"

When the laughter had subsided.

"Listen! Now you've wakened the baby with your shouts. You must go and rock her."

"I don't hear her crying," said Nuala, listening. "Oh, yes, there she is—or is she?"

"Well, in any case go in and bring out the latest bulletins about her."

"What are 'bulletins'? Yes, I'm going—I'm going," and she spent her impatience in vigorously wagging her head as she ran along in.

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" Don't be gone when I come back, mind."

In a short time she reappeared, breathless.

" I rocked her," she panted, " and she's asleep again. And I saw the time, the big hand is at three and the little hand at five, and there was a lady selling flowers at the door."

" Were you talking to her? "

" I was. First I was only looking out of the window at her, and then she said, ' Come here.' "

" And you went? "

" Yes, and she said, ' Do you want any plants? ' and I said, ' I don't know,' and she said, 'Ask the mother has she any old clothes and I'll give her a few plants,' and I said, ' Sure, mamma is not at home,' and she said nothing and I ran away."

" Did you close the hall-door after you?" asked her relative in a casual way.

" I did," said Nuala, reflectively.

" Are you glad? " she went on then, " 'cos, you see, she might take a few clothes herself and leave plants instead, and we not wanting them."

" In Waterford, one time," she continued, " our milk was taken, jug and all—it was a burglar dressed up as an old woman that took it."

Then in a way dismissive of the incident:

" Why do you never dress up now the way you used? Will you dress up now? "

" Oh, no—I am being told a story. Go on with it. I think we were at the part about the ladies—the sisters and their feet."

" Oh, yes—they were trying to make their feet small and couldn't, and the page went round and delivered at all the doors, and—— "

" Delivered? "

" Yes, he delivered at all—— "

" Delivered what? "

" Delivered *the slipper*, of course," said Nuala, triumphantly.

" Oh! "

" And it wouldn't fit the Wicked Sisters and they were

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tearing their hair and stamping their feet, and then they threw away the shoe because it wouldn't fit. And the page asked was there anyone else—'In the kitchen,' he said; and they said, 'Oh, no, only an old riddler of cinders.' But he said that everyone was to fit on the shoe, and he went down, my dear, to Cinderella and put it on her. And it fitted—just most exquisitely nicely! And then the Prince came and married Cinderella and they drove off to the Palace, and they lived there and were happy ever, ever, ever after. Oh, it was a lovely story! Now, tell one you."

HEREAFTER.

Violets and gold that the slow-setting sun
Pours on the sky when a blue day is done;
Seas where, down striding to the margin rocks,
Dark pine trees brood and guard their white-foam flocks;

Mournful monotone of lonely shores
Knocking on the sad heart's secret doors;
Dawn winds trembling tender in the leaves;
Light and shade upon ripe autumn sheaves;

Mountain outlines cragged, bare and bold;
Spring green woods that lap them fold on fold;
Serene childhood's fresh and holy grace;
Strange, well-worn charm of a familiar face;

Hearts that know my faults and love me still;
High hero-deed to fire the meanest will;
—These are God's promises of dearer joys;
To our child souls these are His gift of toys.

M. Bodkin.

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